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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 61  
By Halteman Harwel

A RESOLUTION to continue and extend the reporting deadline for the study mandated by House Joint Resolution No. 50 of the Ninety-Ninth General Assembly relative to businesses owned by women in Tennessee.

WHEREAS, this General Assembly recognizes that there are nearly eight million women-owned businesses in the United States, generating nearly 2.3 trillion dollars in sales, and that businesses owned by women employ one (1) out of every four (4) United States company workers, a total of 18.5 million employees; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly also recognizes that businesses owned by women operate in every commercial and industrial sector, including manufacturing, construction, agribusiness and retail and in high-growth industries, such as health care, business and professional services; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly finds that access to capital is the greatest barrier to growth for any business, and that discrimination takes many forms adversely affecting the ability of businesses owned by women to raise or secure capital, to acquire managerial talents, and to capture market opportunities; and

WHEREAS, firmly believing that Tennessee women and businesses owned by women should have a greater and more meaningful role in the state's economic development programs and in public and private economic development initiatives, the 99th General Assembly enacted

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House Joint Resolution No. 50, which directed the Department of Economic and Community Development to conduct a comprehensive study of businesses owned by women in Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, specifically this study has sought to collect the following information and extrapolate from such collected data to propose viable solutions to problems, discriminatory practices and social and economic barriers faced by women business owners:

(a) Statistical information concerning the women-owned businesses in the state of Tennessee, including number, type, location, number of employees, and financial status;

(b) Data collected and available by private and public sector-entities relating to businesses owned by women;

(c) The status of businesses owned by women statewide, including progress made and barriers that remain to business growth, start-up business concerns, and reasons for business failures;

(d) Types of services and assistance needed by businesses owned by women, including financial, marketing, management and administration and networking; and

(e) The level of government assistance to businesses owned by women; and

WHEREAS, House Joint Resolution No. 50 also created an executive task force comprised of nine (9) astute women business owners to assist the Department of Economic and Community Development in conducting the comprehensive study; and

WHEREAS, although both the department and executive task force have worked assiduously to complete this exhaustive study, the amount of data collected is voluminous and the subject at hand is as complex as it is important; much work remains to be done; and

WHEREAS, because women business owners have made and continue to make significant contributions to the wealth of our communities and to Tennessee's economy, and because women business owners still encounter many subtle forms of discrimination which

adversely affect the ability of their businesses to compete on equal footing in the marketplace, it is imperative that the mandate and the reporting deadline of this committee be extended for a period one (1) year; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE-HUNDREDTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That the Department of Economic and Community Development study mandated by House Joint Resolution No. 50 of the Ninety-Ninth General Assembly relative to businesses owned by women in Tennessee is hereby continued and the reporting deadline extended for a period of one (1) year.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the membership of the executive task force shall remain as constituted by the appointments made pursuant to House Joint Resolution No. 50.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That in filling vacancies on the executive task force, the recommending entities and the Governor shall attempt to assure representation from all geographic areas of the state, large and small businesses, minorities, women, and men.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the task force shall meet at the call of the chair, but at least four (4) times annually.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the members of the task force shall receive no compensation for their services.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That all state agencies shall provide information and otherwise assist the department in the completion of such study, at the request of the Commissioner of Economic and Community Development.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Department of Economic and Community Development shall complete such study and the executive task force shall submit a report to the Governor and the General Assembly detailing the findings and recommendations of the study, which report shall be submitted by October 1, 1998.